

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 OMB-01 CIEP-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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R 031210Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0830

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0034

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR CY TU

SUBJ: CHURCH DISPUTE SIMMERS ON

REF: NICOSIA 4472

1. EVENTS SINCE DECEMBER 11 "ATTACK" ON DEFROCKED BISHOP ANTHIMOS (REF) SHOW THAT CHURCH DISPUTE STILL MUCH ALIVE, DESPITE OVERT GOG EFFORTS TO HELP MAKARIOS COMPOSE IT.
2. EARLY CHRISTMAS MORNING BISHOP ANTHIMOS, ACCOMPANIED BY HUSKY RETAINERS, BULLED HIS WAY INTO LIMASSOL CATHEDRAL TO OFFICIATE. PRESS REPORTS THAT BRIEF SCUFFLE ENSUED WITH POLICE. PERHAPS AT MAKARIOS' URGING, BISHOP CHRYSANTHOS (ELECTED LAST YEAR TO LEAD NEW LIMASSOL SEE) CHOSE NOT REPEAT NOT TO CONTEST ANTHIMOS' USURPATION OF HIS CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS SERVICES. GOC HASTILY DISPATCHED MININTERIOR KOSHIS TO KEEP THINGS QUIET IN LIMASSOL. HE SUCCEEDED.
3. ANTHIMOS ANTIC WAS PROXIMATE CAUSE OF GOG STATEMENT DECEMBER 28 (REF FBIS TA 281356Z) EXPRESSING REGRET AT NEW DISTURBANCES,
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CALLING ON THREE "FORMER" BISHOPS TO FOLLOW MAKARIOS'

LEAD IN RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO MEDIATION INITIATIVE. (GENERAL VIEW IS THAT ARCH-BISHOP SERAPHEIM OF ATHENS, PERHAPS ALSO ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH DEMETRIOS, BEHIND THIS INITIATIVE.)

4. YENNADIOS-LED SYNOD DECEMBER 30 REBUTTED GOG STATEMENT WITH BROAD ATTACK ON THOSE WHO DEBASE SCRIPTURAL TRUTH BY POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM, EXERCISE OF TEMPORAL POWER. (TRANSLATION: MAKARIOS MUST RESIGN PRESIDENCY IF DEFROCKED BISHOPS ARE TO MAKE THEIR PEACE WITH HIM.)

5. MOST GREEK PRESS HAS CONDEMNED CHRISTMAS INCIDENT, REGRETTED BISHOP'S HARD-NOSED REPLY TO ATHENS. FAR RIGHTIST SHEETS ARE GRUMPING OVER GOG STATEMENT, ROLE OF AMBASSADOR DOUNTAS (WHO FAVORITE TARGET FOR RIGHTIST UNHAPPINESS). TRUE TO FORM, PARTISAN SHEETS ARE DAILY SWIPING AT EACH OTHER RE CHURCH ISSUE.

6. COMMENT: SO FAR, GOG EFFORTS TO HELP MAKARIOS RESOLVE CHURCH DISPUTE HAVE COME TO GRIEF. DEFROCKED BISHOPS REMAIN OBDURATE AS EVER. RECENT EXCHANGES SMACK STRONGLY OF PRE-COUP ERA. CHURCH DISPUTE HARBORS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR CIVIL STRIFE. THIS FACT MAY EXPLAIN MAKARIOS' SOFTPEDALLING OF RECENT INCIDENTS. END COMMENT. BROWN

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